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Indian playing the mĩrĩ (jurupari)

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Always playing the mĩrĩã, the men surround the maloca where the women and children are shut in. All of them leave by the back door, while the men enter the maloca by the main door. Now the men shut themselves inside and for about half an hour play the mĩrĩã. Other instruments are not played in these circumstances. Afterwards the mysterious instruments are hidden in another hut, or in the forest, from where, at intervals, some men play them during the dances.

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As we have already said (VI-3), the Waxsó-ro does not seem to be a "dress of decency" for the men. As a matter of fact, one finds big boys without the Waxsó-ro, with only the cord as a belt. The men readily take it off in the presence of other persons. Some have it so small and imperfect that it hardly covers them, and one does not perceive any concern about adjusting it well. Therefore we conclude that it is only dress for protection in the forest (105).

[115]

105. In May of 1954 we made known to a Karapanã Indian, Vicente by name, a resident for several years in Uaracapá (river Papuri), our desire to visit the region of the Karapanãs, of the headwaters of the Áua. Spontaneously, as though to warn us, he told us that over there they still did not wear any clothes. After this excursion, talking to a Tukano lady, already Christian and who since 1926 has been living with the Irmã Missionárias /Missionary Sisters/, in answer to the question as to why the men wore the Waxsó-ro and the women nothing, we heard her respond that the women "did not need a protection," physically, like the men.

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As for the feminine Waxsó-ro, in our opinion it might be a "dress of adornment" or "of attraction." 1st. not so much because those of tucum, such as those of beads in particular, are artistic; 2nd. as because of the fact that they are so small that they do not cover sufficiently; 3rd. and that they are wom exclusively during the feasts, together with the paintings (106).

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106. We were informed by the natives themselves that, while the men at the feasts, besides the small Waxsó-ro, also adopt the large one, appropriate for the dances, the women

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/footnote 106 cont./ nowadays rarely wear Waxsó-ro, not even as a dance ornament. Some persons declared to us that they had never seen a feminine Waxsó-ro made of glass beads, the Yaxkẽ Waxsó-ro, and that the women always walked around destitute of clothing.

302 About the paintings, we know that they consider them only as adornment.

As for the delicate parts, it does not seem that they are the
291 breasts. As a matter of fact, some appear with the bust uncovered
302 without bashfulness. During the dances they decorate the breasts
834 with red circles, which still remain for several days. And there is no great circumspection with the legs either, because, when they sit down or squat, they draw the skirt between the legs, but leave the legs and thighs uncovered.

[178] It seems that they are impressed more by the persons' bust, hence the greater care on the part of the natives, even those who already have /384/ relations with the civilized, in having it uncovered and painted for the dances (107),

> 107. Without perceiving that she was being observed (so it seems to us), we were able to note a young Bará woman, soon after the rite of her puberty initiation, absorbed in painting her own breasts, with the red powder of carajurú /carajura/, which she had wrapped in a leaf. A little girl of about 5 or 6 years of age at once tried to imitate her, with similar designs.

perhaps while the rest of the body is covered with pants or skirt.
[832] Some natives assured us positively of the attraction that the men feel by the women's bust.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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622 571 433 the Cubeo headman is lacking in precisely those attributes that in other parts of the world have traditionally played a prominent part in political evolution.

622 554 The two terms, *habókũ* and *kenámi upákũ*, meaning, respectively, a man of substance and "owner of the house," illustrate the conceptual range in Cubeo leadership. The *habókũ* is the leader, whose presence, enhanced by a muscular physique, commands respect, who has undisputed skill in hunting, in fishing, in crafts, and who commands ceremonial lore. He possesses the full range of ceremonial regalia, feather headdresses, necklaces, and girdles. His equipment is of the best quality and in excellent condition. The *kenámi upákũ*, [592] on the other hand, is simply the head of the maloca. The *habókũ* is apt to be head of the house, but a house head need not be *habókũ*, although as a leader he will possess some *habókũ* attributes. Thus 622 not all headmen qualify as *habókũ*. Those of higher-ranking sibs, 614 such as the *Órabawa*, *Aúnbwawũ*, and *Hehénewa*, usually do, and 554 those of lower-ranking sibs, such as the *Bahúkiwa*, usually do not. The existence of a concept of *habókũ* is a spur to the ambition of a headman, although the status is honorific only. The *habókũ* commands respect everywhere in the tribe, but his authority, such as it is, is limited to his own sib. Sibmen share in the prestige of having a *habókũ* as headman. Not every *habókũ* is the head of his sib, for in some sibs several men hold the title and their senior is then the head- [791] man. In time of war the *habókũ* is the natural war leader. Even when not headman his leadership is drawn upon in hunting and in all collective activities.

622 614 554 301 292 In the higher-ranking sibs the insignia of *habókũ* include, first, a quartz cylinder worn as a pendant, a jaguar-tooth girdle, an armadillo-vertebrae girdle, and, finally, *mápena*, the ceremonial headdress of feathers and monkey hair. The *Bahúkiwa*, who are not privileged to wear either the quartz pendant or the girdles, maintain that *mápena* are the principal insignia of *habókũ* status among them, although they defer to the higher status of the insignia of their higher-ranking clans. The *Hehénewa* deride this *Bahúkiwa* claim and insist that without the pendant and girdles no man can call himself *habókũ*. The *Bahúkiwa* define *habókũ* as an achieved status and the *Hehénewa* as a hereditary status, but only in the sense that it pertains to high-ranking sibs. Within the proper sib any man may acquire the insignia and the status of *habókũ*.[1]

[114] [565] [1] Apropos of social status, Martius (1867, I, 596) reported caste distinctions of chiefs, nobles, and commoners on the Vaupés. He gives no details. One suspects an exaggeration, although the bases for his view are understandable.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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INSIGNIA OF STATUS

Ornamentation is for the Cubeo a requisite for basic status; one might say for human status. The Macú, for example, are sometimes derided as "not human," and it is noted in evidence that they have no ornaments. The very first day a newborn infant is in the house, it is painted with a jaguar design and its mother puts twine cord on its wrists and a seed necklace around its neck. An undecorated child is a rarity, an extraordinarily underprivileged creature. The common denominator of personal ornamentation includes face and body painting with red pigment (*urucú*) and a necklace. The wristlets of children have the magical purpose of fattening the arms, but the necklaces are sheer insignia of status. A popular trade item around Indian tribes is a necklace of silver plates in a triangle shape which all the Indians of the region call "butterflies." Necklaces of various seeds are common for men and women. In the past, ear ornaments and lower-lip labrets were common to both sexes. The Cubeo are proud and sensitive about their personal appearance. They apply pigment with great care, using dye rollers to print a design and pigment applicators that will apply parallel lines. Ornaments are always in good condition and of good quality.

The minimum ornamental requirement for full standing as an adult male is the complex feather headdress, *mápena* (feathers of the red *arara* [macaw]), which actually includes feathers of many different birds mounted on a crown of plaited fiber as well as a rope of monkey hair. These feathers, painstakingly gathered and put together, are handled with very great care, kept in a long fiber box where they are laid away always slowly, ceremonially, and in proper order, to be taken out for a dance. A man who does not own *mápena* borrows from the headman or from another sibmate so that he can take part in certain dances. All men possess some part of the full set of feathers, but only a headman will feel the strong obligation to possess the full set. No one among the *Bahúkiwa* owned a complete *mápena*, but this poverty was not too disturbing to them. The downstream *Hehénewa* were well provided. *Mápena*, however, are not a mark of sib rank.

The *Bahúkiwa* attitude toward *mápena* is ambivalent; their joy in possession is tempered by fear of death because of it. They do not make the headdresses but buy them from other Tucanoan and Arawakan tribes, and they suspect that whoever has sold them the feathers has included a spell that will kill the owner if he should own the full set. One informant explained that the feathers have power

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One informant explained that the feathers have power that may be too strong for the owner and that is why it is better not to have too much. Some men accumulate outfits of *mápena*. They are certain to die from overdoing, it is said. A host at a drinking party may lay out his *mápena* in a tray at the doorway so that guests may wear them for dancing. It is a point of pride to be able to supply guests in this way. He addresses a guest as follows: "Here it is now, this poor thing that I have. When you put this on you may drink. Our ancestor wore this when he made chicha to drink. He became sick when he did this, when he adorned himself. Other people know how to make this [*mápena*]. He bought it from them."

The girdles of jaguar teeth and of armadillo vertebrae were also possessed only by the *Hehénewa*. They are worn only during ceremonial dances. These girdles are symbols of shamanistic power although they are not shamanistic insignia. The jaguar is, of course, the full-fledged shaman himself. The armadillo claw forms the handle on the special rattle a shaman uses to bring rain. The quartz cylinder (*kenádox*: stone) may also be a shamanistic symbol since stone crystals are part of the medicine man's equipment. But whatever its symbolic significance, it is for the Cubeo the ornament of major prestige, limited to the high-ranking sibs. The quartz from which this pendant is laboriously made and drilled is found, I was told, only on the Tiquié River and is widely traded in the region. The *Hehénewa* claim that their first ancestors brought the *kenádox* with them and that is why they alone may wear them. Koch-Grünberg found these pendants to be widespread among the Tucano, where even children wore them.[2]

HEADMANSHIP

The headmanship, whether of *habókü* status or *kenámi upákü*, normally stays within a particular lineage, although no lineage has a specific and traditional claim to the office. The office may go from a father to his eldest son or from a man to his next younger brother, depending upon circumstances and upon which of these pushes himself forward most effectively. Koch-Grünberg observed that among

[2] Martius (1867, I, 599 ff.) observed that the quartz cylinder is a special trait of the Vaupés. He put the source of the stone at the Apaporis and Caquetá rivers and reported that it took two generations to make a pendant. The stone is ground into shape with volcanic ash obtained from the Solimoes River and the hole is bored with a bamboo drill. He saw chiefs on the Vaupés who wore pendants drilled through the long way, an exceptional mark of high status. The size of the pendant, according to Martius, was in proportion to the deeds of the wearer in war and in the hunt.

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In preparing chicha, the manioc is allowed to soften for four days. It is left in the maloca covered with leaves until it has turned a dark green color and has lost much of its moisture. Then it is grated, pounded through a sieve, and put through the tipiti press. The dry lumps are toasted lightly on the manioc oven and stirred into a fine grain. Small manioc cakes are prepared from these grains. The cakes are thoroughly masticated and the saliva-drenched balls are mixed with water. After fermentation has begun, a quantity of sugar cane extract is added, and this mixture is left to ferment for several days. Masticated pupunha mash may be substituted for the manioc. A mixture of pupunha mash with sugar cane extract makes a potent and very laxative drink. Many communities add maize as well as a variety of root plants to a basic manioc mash.

This period of preparation is one in which the house is spruced up and personal possessions and ornaments are inspected, compared, and readied for wear and display. Nowadays women regard their long cloth skirts as gala wear. If it is to be an important drinking party a woman hopes to have a new skirt that she has never worn before. All the elaborate male ornamentation of feather headdresses, necklaces, girdles, and pendants are fetched out and tried on. Musical instruments – Panpipes, long flageolets, whistles – are tuned and repaired. Songs are practiced and dance steps tried out. A nightly respite from the labors of manioc preparation is the amusement of watching the children play at dancing the adult dances, singing the dance songs, tasting the freshly prepared batches of chicha, taking coca, smoking, and listening to the old men chant snatches of the origin traditions. The mood is such that the minor rancors of community life are smoothed out. The headman takes advantage of this mood to bring the Satellites back as permanent residents of the community. The Satellites are normally invited to be cosponsors of a sib affair, bringing a contribution not of manioc but of sugar cane, or pupunha when that fruit is in season. The headman believes that when the estranged sibmates see how happy all are they will want to come back. There is no doubt that a Satellite is strongly drawn to the festive spirit of the main maloca. But he always has the time during the hangover of the morning after to consider whether it is worth returning.

The headman makes the first proposal for a drinking party and discusses the date and its scale with the male household heads. Cosponsorship means that a household head undertakes to prepare a notable amount of chicha that can be shown to the guests. When the invitations go out, the names of the cosponsors are given, and when

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Koch-Grünberg has observed this dance among neighboring Tucanoans as well as among Arawakan-speaking tribes. He observed it as a courting dance, boys and girls leaving the house after a dance and disappearing into the surrounding darkness (1909, I, 293, II 272). There is no mistaking the erotic undertones of this dance among the Cubeo. But it cannot ordinarily be a courting dance since the participants are normally sibmates and phratry mates if unmarried. The first girls to join the dancers are, in fact, their sisters. But as the evening wears on, the erotic character of the dance emerges in a dangerous form. An unmarried girl too often chooses to thrust herself beneath the arms of her sister's husband, a married woman "chooses" a husband's brother. What is ordinary courtship in tribes that bring together potential marriage mates at their drinking parties is largely adultery or the threat of adultery among the Cubeo, who entertain within the exogamous circle. I suspect that in the case of the Cubeo, simple courtship dances have become embroiled in a changing social order that has gradually built up a phratric system out of independent exogamous local groups. In the process the dance has lost its innocence.

The dancing has a deceptively decorous appearance. As the girls insert themselves between two male dancers, under the arm of one, the men never pause, turn their heads, or change expression. The girl puts her right arm lightly around her partner's waist. She holds her left hand before her, at her skirt. Crouched beneath the yoke

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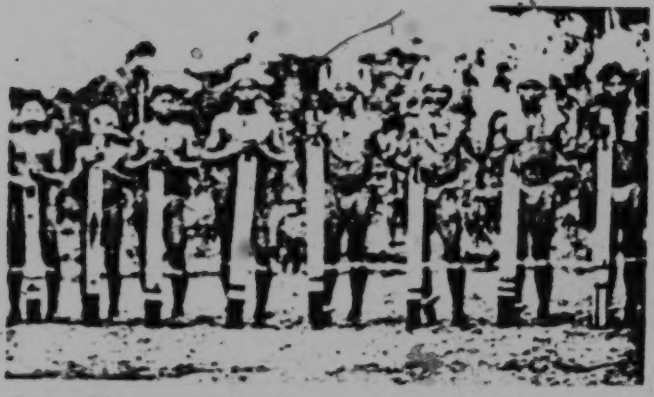

Fig. 10. *Hehénewa* men in full dancing costume.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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used by the Cubeo for that purpose. It is a ceremonial pennant and it accompanies the dead as a walking stick in the afterlife. Dancing staffs are hollowed cylinders that are stamped on the ground to produce a booming sound and are known as the "good sticks." They have a beneficent effect upon a dance, but whether by magic or by association is not clear. The elaborate coronets of feathers (*mápena*) are apparently sacred. They are handled with great care and kept in a special box. While a woman will touch the *mápena* she will not actually handle them. I did not, however, learn the Cubeo theory of their sacredness. Musical instruments may be regarded as quasi-sacred because they invoke birds and insects but are subject to no taboos (except for the ancestral flutes and trumpets). Flageolets embody the butterfly (*tatárako*). They are played by sounding *ta tara ta tara*, the sound, the Cubeo say, of the butterfly. The large eight-reed Panpipe is *kawi* – the vulture whose hovering form the Cubeo visualize as overhanging the mourning ceremony. Woven ligatures (*ñikndwa*) worn by men below the knee and daubed with a salmon-pink pigment have several magical effects.[8] Worn at drinking parties they both hasten intoxication and promote long life. They flesh out the calf – a symbol of growth and for the Cubeo aesthetically pleasing.

The association between intoxication and long life as expressed in the ligature seems more than casual. For the Cubeo, intensity of feeling is the goal of ceremonial life. Excitement is one form of the sacred for the Cubeo; perhaps it is the most important expression of sacredness they know. This is borne out by the prominence of excitants in Cubeo religion. Tobacco, coca, *mihi*, chicha, capsicum peppers, all have sacred value for the Cubeo. The potency attributed to an excited state cannot be said to be magical nor can it be attributed to spirits. They have a bird as the spirit of intoxication but this bird does not cause intoxication – it presides over it. The religious significance of intensification of feeling is not an instrumental one in any narrow sense of the word. One can only state this as an impression, since the Cubeo did not put it into words. Intensification of feeling stands for them simply as an assertion of life. That is why, it seems to me, the Cubeo can assert that the salmon-colored ligature is for long life and for drunkenness both.

[8] Women also used to wear these garters in the days before the petticoat became common.

6t Moser and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

sixty feet wide, with the ridge of its roof thirty feet above the ground. This 342
ridge is supported by six great posts, three on either side; the central space extending down the length of the *maloca* is like the nave of a church. The roof is thatched with palm fronds overlapping to a depth of four inches and extending almost to ground level on either side. These fronds may have to be brought from a great distance and vary in quality – the best lasting for years, while others rot quickly and require frequent patching.

As the sun rises each morning over the surrounding forest it lights on the [532]
striking clay and charcoal designs which are painted along the whole width of the front wall. Slivers of light find their way through the palm screening and form patterns on the floor and the walls inside. The only other light comes from the men's and women's entrances at opposite ends of the house, entrances which are often kept shut to discourage the flying insects that are usually at their worst during the middle of the day. From these doorways 353
bars of sunlight cross the hard earth floor, lighting the main posts of the house. Beyond, just discernible, is the *chicha* canoe, the great vat which quenches the thirst of the dancing guests at festivals. Near by stands a forked pole where hang coca pouches, fruit-husk ankle-rattles and fretworked gourd *maracas*. On the floor are calabashes, some with coca inside, others with tobacco, and the wooden stools on which the men squat, passing half the night over their stories of past deeds in tribal wars and great hunting expeditions.

Overhead the smoke-blackened thatch is hidden in the gloom. Hanging [272]
from a beam is the most treasured possession: the barkcloth-covered palm box containing ceremonial feathers, monkey-fur belts and puma-tooth necklaces – all the precious adornments for the tribal dances, the greatest occasion of all in the lives of the Indians. The palm-woven screens, which [354]
divide the quarters of the women and the head of the house from those of guests, reach from floor to thatch. Near by are the great, flat, pottery cassava ovens. Hosts of baskets and *cumare* hammocks are strung from the house posts around the fires, and the hard earth floor is kept spotlessly clean by thousands of tiny scavenger ants.

Why the *malocas* should have been built on such a vast and gloomy scale 342
remains a mystery. It is possible that their very size gives the Indian a sense of 161
protection from the surrounding forest. It may also help to keep the interior cooler. But it is most likely a sign of depopulation, the breaking up of the clans through rubber exploitation and disease; where once a hundred or more people lived, now there are twenty.

José once told us that his father spoke of tribal wars on the river, when ...

ABOVE: *Coca leaves are put into a cooking pot before baking.* BELOW: *Curing a hangover by inhaling green pepper.* [see p. 62-B]

/p. 70-A/

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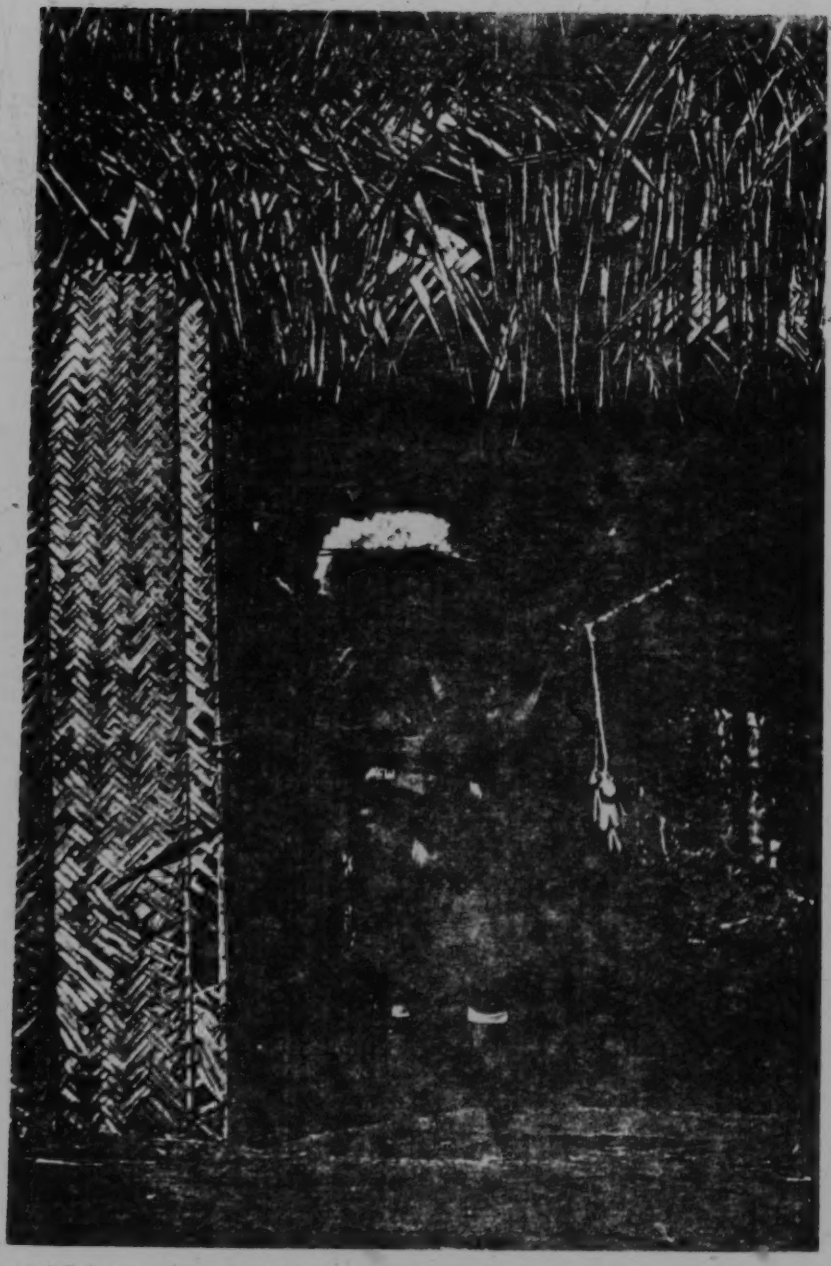

A Tukano shāman in festival regalia with his kurubeti pebble stave.

o: Moser & Tayler E,N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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A head-dress made from the feathers of the royal crane.

796 monotone of the shaman. At intervals the coca calabash passed from hand to hand and each man threw a deer-bone spoon of the sage-green powder into his mouth. He stored it in his cheek and gradually the coca, mixed with saliva, filtered down his throat. Louder and louder, faster and faster became the chanting, echoing between the walls of the vast dark interior. The shaman worked himself into a frenzy, waving his arms out in front of him, his hands moving in wild gesticulations, his voice a rapid series of falsetto monotones; he was expelling all evil spirits from the tribal precincts to the heads of the *caños* and to other lands. The incantations continued for nearly two hours and then in the early hours of the morning there was silence.

796 301 The time had arrived for Bréo to unlock the precious box of plumages and he lowered it to the floor. He unwrapped the barkcloth cover and took off the lid of the beautifully woven palm box. Item by item he distributed the contents to the waiting figures, eagerly clambering to adorn themselves. First the smaller boys were given their simple crowns of red and yellow macaw and toucan tail-feathers, and they dashed away to adjust these on their heads. Underneath lay monkey-fur belts, ancient quartz pendants, puma-tooth necklaces and the most important items of all, magnificent feather head-dresses. These Bréo carefully selected and gave to the elders of the tribe. Crowns of toucan feathers woven on *cumare* frames adorned their heads, brilliant gold and red, ringed with white duck-down. Majestic royal crane plumage, stuck into a banana stem which projected down the back, jutted vertically up from the back of the head. The white feathers were woven together in a *cumare* mesh and stood out like quivering spindles of spun glass, gleaming in the darkness. Behind was a single red macaw tail-feather, a deer bone bound to the banana stem with monkey fur and last of all the wing plumage of an egret.

301 Many of the men wore giant quartz obelisks dangling from their necks. They make them no more, but their ancestors used to spend days rubbing down large chunks of quartz in pebbleworn channels in the river beds. Others had necklaces of wild boars' tusks, pointing concentrically outwards. There were many monkey-fur armlets with glistening beetle wings which [292] jingled as the men moved. Around the waist was another belt of monkey fur with puma teeth attached; below the knees finely-woven *cumare* garters, rubbed yellow with river clay, and above the right ankle dried *watcha* nut [302] rattles. This, with the fierce red facial paint and black body design, made up the splendid dancing regalia of the Tukano. The women had no adornments; [562] south of the Caquetá they stuck rings of white duck-down to their ankles with mud, but here they only painted their faces and bodies.

796 535 Now the dancing proper began. Since it was the manioc festival only the ceremonial *Nahubasa*, signifying the complete cycle of manioc from the time it was planted to the time it became cassava, was danced. Each man carried a long cane stave in his right hand and they joined in a line across the centre of

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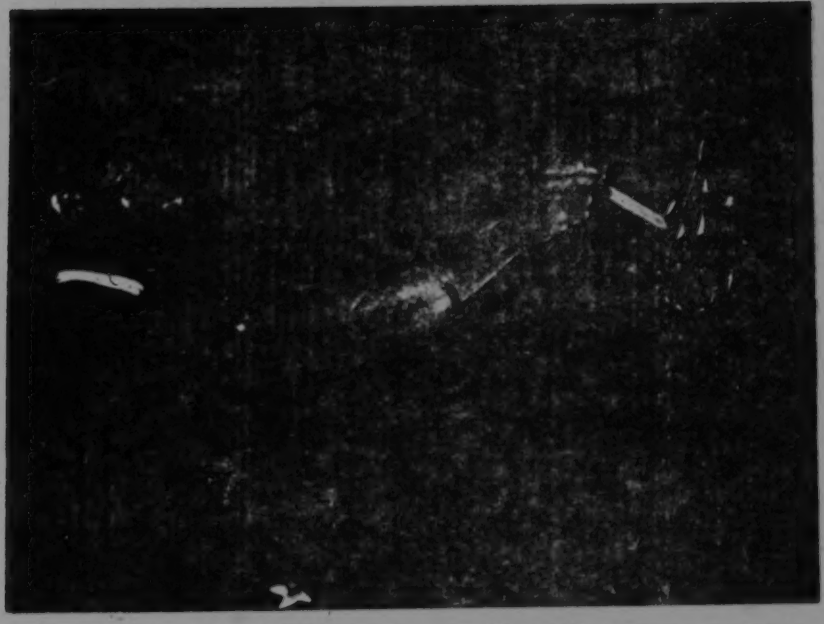

ABOVE LEFT: An Indian taking snuff; round his neck a quartz pendant and a necklace strung with jaguar teeth. ABOVE RIGHT: Boy playing pan-pipes. BELOW: A headman lights a torch of beeswax.